

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

Final Meeting Minutes

August 22, 2022

3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Authority Members

Christian Leinbach, Berks County Board of Commissioners, Chair

Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer

Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary

Jim Gerlach, President, GRCA, Assistant Secretary

Peter Urscheler, Phoenixville Borough Mayor, Assistant Treasurer

David Zellers, Montgomery County Director of Commerce

Brian O'Leary, Executive Director, Chester County Planning Commission

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Adoption of July 25, 2022 Minutes

Christian Leinbach asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Scott France said there were two corrections, and the minutes have been updated to reflect these changes.

Commissioner Ken Lawrence motioned and Peter Urscheler seconded to approve the corrected draft minutes of the July 25, 2022 SRPRA meeting.

3. Board Member Comments

There were no Board member comments.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were no public comments submitted.

5. Subcommittee Reports

a. Finance – Comm. Lawrence, Chair

I. Banking Update

Commissioner Ken Lawrence reminded the Board that at the last meeting they voted for Victory Bank to be selected as the SRPRA's bank. The Finance Committee is in the process of getting the account set up, which should be completed before the Authority's next meeting.

II. Signature Powers

Commissioner Ken Lawrence said that two signatures will be required: Christian Leinbach (Chair) and Commissioner Ken Lawrence (Treasurer). As well, two additional Board members will also be included on the banking (Mayor Peter Urscheler and the SRPRA's future Executive Director).

b. Marketing – Brian O'Leary, Chair

I. Logo – Action

Brian O’Leary reported that the Marketing Committee met last Friday and voted unanimously to accept a logo that was presented as a 4th option (image of a train moving forward) they felt was the best from a variety of standpoints: contemporary, simple, and the size can be varied. He reminded the Board that his committee is made up of communications professionals from each county.

Brian O’Leary motioned, and Peter Urscheler seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to accept the Marketing Committee’s recommended logo and adopt it as the official logo of the SRPRA.

II. Marketing Structure

Brian O’Leary said the Marketing Committee also discussed the need to get on social media and to set up a Constant Contact account and an email address. As some of these actions involve funding, he said action would be deferred until the banking is set up and it can be done under the Authority. The website the Board selected at the last meeting (GoSRPRA.com) has been reserved. The group is beginning to work on content, including: 1) tag-line; 2) purpose; 3) description of the Authority; 4) membership; 5) Q&A; 6) history/timeline; 7) press clippings, and 8) benefits. His group is mindful of the need to reach multiple audiences, including: state and local officials, general public and elected officials. The Marketing Committee will strive to build outreach that isn’t overly technical and bureaucratic at their next meeting.

c. **Planning – Scott France, Chair**

I. Insurance coverages – **Action**

Scott France reminded the Board that at the last meeting, there were three proposals presented, and Old Republic was selected as the Authority’s insurance carrier; the total monthly premium is \$1,975.00 and coverage would commence on September 1, 2022. The Planning Committee shared this information with professional staff in the three counties and did reach consensus that they would support this policy. The question was raised as to whether one million dollars was the proper limit to be set up; upon consulting with the Authority’s broker and other staff they agreed that the proposed limit was appropriate and that a higher rate could be considered in future should activities warrant additional coverage.

Scott France motioned, and Brian O’Leary seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to procure coverage for the SRPRA with Old Republic’s proposed policy commencing September 1, 2022.

II. Outside Agency Coordination

1. Norfolk Southern

No discussion with Norfolk Southern yet. Their letter last month or so expressed their concerns, and the Committee is still putting together a response letter, but there is a question as to whether the response letter will be sent out before the Authority has its consultant. Once a draft reply is finished, the Committee will run it by the SPRPA’s Commissioner Chairs.

2. SEPTA

Scott France said that contact should be initiated with SEPTA re the need for partnership.

3. AMTRAK

Steady coordination with AMTRAK has been maintained throughout; have not heard from them in the past month.

4. PennDOT

Scott France said that a letter, signed by Commissioners Lawrence, Leinbach and Moskowitz, was sent out on August 5th to PennDOT, inviting them to be a partner in the SRPRA's efforts and requesting their support for the endeavor. A reply has not been received, and Scott said a follow-up letter might be useful, perhaps facilitated by the Board's leadership, to engage in more detail.

d. **Personnel**

Discussion under this Committee was deferred to an executive session

e. **Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair**

Jim Gerlach reported that the Community Engagement Committee was discussing the utilization of social media to update public on the project and its progress. He thought his committee might need to meet with the Marketing Committee to decide who's doing what. The committee is also considering how best engage with regional organizations to build interest and obtain input by conducting outreach and use them as sounding boards to provide input. Their next meeting will be held in mid-September to compile and provide the Board with a list of organizations targeted for outreach. He proposed a meeting of both Marketing and Community Engagement Committees to iron out jurisdictional issues.

Christian Leinbach supported the two teams meeting as soon as possible to map out each team's specific goals and responsibilities. This would also facilitate additional discussions on budget implications, spending, and who will oversee these items. Jim Gerlach and Brian O'Leary agreed to be in touch and set up a joint committee meeting.

An Executive Session was held to discuss personnel matters before the SRPRA Board.

6. **Consultants and Executive Director Strategy**

a. **Recommendation on Consultant – Action**

Brian O'Leary said that contingent upon review and approval by the SRPRA's solicitor, the members of the SRPRA Board recommend that the Authority approve a contract with Transportation for America. Christian Leinbach, Chair, asked Daniel P. Becker of Kozloff Stoudt (the SRPRA's legal representation) to provide the Board members with copies of the contract upon completing his review.

Brian O'Leary motioned, and Peter Urscheler seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried for the SRPRA to enter into a contract for technical consultant support with Transportation for America.

b. **Recommendation on Executive Director – Action**

Jim Gerlach said that after considering four candidates for the role of the Authority's Interim Executive Director, the Personnel Committee has selected a preferred candidate and recommends authorizing their choice so that they may begin negotiating a specific consulting agreement. Christian Leinbach, Chair, asked Daniel P. Becker of Kozloff Stoudt (the SRPRA's legal representation) to provide the Board members with copies of the reviewed contract prior to the SRPRA's next meeting so that it could be added to September's agenda as an action item.

A motion was made by Jim Gerlach and seconded by Commissioner Ken Lawrence to enter into a contract with the proposed candidate to serve as interim Executive Director. All voted unanimously, and the motion was carried.

7. Other Business

Scott France said that it was noted at a previous meeting that one of the Board members inquired about the status of Amtrak's bus service from Reading to Pottstown to Philadelphia which began in the spring of 2022. He reached out to a contact at Amtrak who said they are averaging about 24 tickets per day using a temporary vehicle, and are waiting for the permanent bus to arrive from the manufacturer before commencing publicity. He added that it will take time to build the market and Amtrak looks forward to working with the SRPRA in the future on encouraging train connections with the bus service.

Scott also reminded the Board that due to an upcoming holiday, the September SRPRA meeting will not be held on the fourth Monday of the month, but will instead be held on September 19, 2022 at 3 p.m.

8. General Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Adjourn

Chairman Christian Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 4 p.m.

Executive Session Meeting
via Zoom

Next Board Meeting
September 19, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Meehan

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